

This is an official

DHEC Health Advisory

Distributed via the South Carolina Health Alert Network
January 23, 2006, 3:00pm EST

Mycobacterial Skin Infections Following Pedicures

Background Information

DHEC has received several reports of severe skin and soft tissue infections (SSTIs) due to rapid growing mycobacteria in persons who have had pedicures in both nail and day spa salons in South Carolina.

The SSTIs usually are noticed 2-4 weeks following a pedicure. The lesions are distributed on the legs over the areas that have been soaked in water during the pedicure. The number of lesions vary from 3 lesions to more than 20 on each leg. The lesions first have the appearance of papules that are often thought to be "bug bites" but then progress to painful large fluctuant boils with subsequent ulceration. Healing often occurs with scarring. Lymphatic dissemination may occur. Most patients have been empirically treated with several different antibiotics active against *Staphylococcus aureus*, leading to delay in diagnosis and progression of the lesions. Shaving of legs 24 hours prior to receiving a pedicure is associated with a higher risk of mycobacterial SSTIs.

Clinical Information

Rapidly growing mycobacteria (RGM) include several different species such as *M. fortuitum*, *M. chelonae* and *M. abscessus*. RGM are extremely hardy and can survive in water and organic debris for prolonged periods of time. They are very resistant to disinfection and have been associated with outbreaks of infection following pedicures as well as numerous types of procedures including liposuction, face lifts and injections of various materials including steroids.

RGM have been isolated from pedicure whirlpool footbaths in several salons in SC and in other states with reported outbreaks of SSTIs due to RGM. These implicated salons were not properly cleaning and disinfecting their equipment. It is believed that microtrauma to the skin (an example is the micronicks caused by shaving) allow RGM in the contaminated water to initiate infection.

Patient Follow-up and Reporting of Cases

All persons with skin lesions on their lower leg(s) should be questioned about receiving a pedicure within the past 2 months. It is recommended that cultures be obtained, preferably by skin biopsy, and sent to a commercial laboratory for mycobacterial culture. Appropriate therapy includes antibiotic(s) active against RGM, often for 1 to 2 months. Follow-up is necessary to ensure that there is an adequate response to therapy.

Please report cases of mycobacterial SSTIs associated with pedicures to DHEC via the contact numbers listed below. An investigation will be conducted to identify the source of infection. SC Labor, Licensing and Regulation (LLR) will then be able to inspect the salon and determine necessary actions to protect clients.

Measures are now being taken by LLR to establish procedures for cleaning and disinfecting pedicure whirlpool footbaths and ensuring compliance.

DHEC Contact Information for Reportable Diseases and Reporting Requirements

Reporting of outbreaks/clusters of cases is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2004 List of Reportable Conditions available at: http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/docs/reportable_conditions.pdf

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region.

Region 1

(Anderson, Oconee)
220 McGee Road
Anderson, SC 29625
Phone: (864) 231-1966
Fax: (864) 260-5623
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-298-4442

(Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Saluda)

1736 S. Main Street
Greenwood, SC 29646
Phone: 1-888-218-5475
Fax: (864) 942-3690
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-420-1915

Region 2

(Greenville, Pickens)
PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 282-4139
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: (864) 460-5355 or
1-800-993-1186

(Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union)

PO Box 4217
151 E. Wood Street
Spartanburg, SC 29305-4217
Phone: (864) 596-2227 ext. 210
Fax: (864) 596-3443
Nights / Weekends: (864) 809-3825

Region 3

(Chester, Lancaster, York)
PO Box 817
1833 Pageland Highway
Lancaster, SC 29721
Phone: (803) 286-9948
Fax: (803) 286-5418
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-867-3886 or
1-888-739-0748

(Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland)

2000 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2749
Fax: (803) 576-2993
Nights / Weekends: (803) 304-4252

Region 4

(Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Sumter)
PO Box 1628
105 North Magnolia Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: (803) 773-5511
Fax: (803) 773-6366
Nights/Weekends: 1-877-831-4647

(Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion)

145 E. Cheves Street
Florence, SC 29506
Phone: (843) 661-4830
Fax: (843) 661-4859
Nights / Weekends: (843) 660-8145

Region 5

(Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg)
PO Box 1126
1550 Carolina Avenue
Orangeburg, SC 29116
Phone: (803) 533-7199
Fax: (803) 536-9118
Nights / Weekends: (803) 954-8513

Region 5 (cont)

(Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell)
1680 Richland Avenue, W. Suite 40
Aiken, SC 29801
Phone: (803) 642-1618
Fax: (803) 643-8386
Nights / Weekends: (803) 827-8668 or
1-800-614-1519

Region 6

(Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg)
2830 Oak Street
Conway, SC 29526-4560
Phone: (843) 365-3126
Fax: (843) 365-3153
Nights / Weekends: (843) 381-6710

Region 7

Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester)
4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600
N. Charleston, SC 29405
Phone: (843) 746-3806
Fax: (843) 746-3851
Nights / Weekends: (843) 219-8470

Region 8

(Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper)
219 S. Lemacks Street
Walterboro, SC 29488
Phone: (843) 525-7603
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-614-4698

Bureau of Disease Control

Acute Disease Epidemiology Division
1751 Calhoun Street
Box 101106
Columbia, SC
Phone: (803) 898-0861
Fax: (803) 898-0897
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.